Noel Fresh Bait

10/26/62 - Scali - 175 ABC's State Dept correspondent was in that agency's press room at 1:30 pm eating a ~~to~~ bologna sandwich when he was phoned by Aleksandr S. Fomin, a counsellor in the USSR embassy suspected of being a much more ~~important~~ important functionary. He in some agitation, as [illegible], asked Scali to lunch with him, as they had before. When ~~Scali~~ Scali pleaded preoccupation, Fomin urged the importance of the ~~[illegible]~~ meeting upon Scali & they both sped to the Occidental Rest. Where Fomin immediately the following settlement of the missile crisis (174): 1) USSR withdrawal of missiles under UN inspection; 2) Castro to accept no more "offensive weapons in future; 3) US pledge not to invade Cuba (I'm certain this was not Fomin's language - it is not in quotes - but he would never have conceded these missiles were "offensive." Attributing the words to him is [illegible], dishonest & a propaganda device. Fomin urged Scali to take this up at the State Dept & promised if Stevenson were to "pursue" this line at the UN he would find Zorin "interested." The remarkable thing is that this is more of a concession than Stevenson would have been [illegible] had he been permitted to offer his original plan - but otherwise is very close to his resolution. - which did not commit Castro to anything or the US to peaceful behavior to Cuba. Had anyone stopped to think, it would have been apparent in Cuba ~~would~~ could commit Cuba that with any understanding it would have ~~been~~ been apparent that once promised peace Castro dismissed the missiles & once removed the USSR had achieved its purpose in moving them in & had no ~~need~~ need to return them. This was face-saving, necessary to protect US interest & make JFK look good. Zorin did not, as he could have, make the proposal at the UN, openly or to others, for this would have put JFK under public pressure too soon & would have forced the rejection of the idea before it had been adequately ~~to~~ considered. Fomin planted the idea, outside channels, privately, but in a way that would not remain secret.

10/26/61 (Scali-2) Scali notes to Hilsman, who decided this would be, in Abel's words, "the first intimation that Kh. was searching for a way out." Both went to the Rusk's office, where the Secretary of State explain resorted to his yellow ruled pad rather than ~~to~~ his secretary and ~~pad~~ wrote out a message immediately cleared with the White House by phone and told Scali, "I want you to go back to this man & tell him this." (177) US "sees real possibilities in this" & suggests representatives of both governments "could work this matter out with U Thant & each other." Scali delivered the message at 7:35 in the Statler coffee shop, almost next door to USSR Embassy. (While this is fast, it is not nearly as fast as Abel has implied; on the other hand, it reflects but little time for reflection by the US govt., & perhaps most conspicuously, Abel's account indicates it never had a ~~chance~~ chance to get lost in the ex comm.) Upon Scali's ~~assurance~~ assurances that this reply came "from the highest sources", Fomin ran off to "communicate immediately with the highest sources in Moscow" (Abel's words). Meanwhile, at 6 pm a teletype message started coming in from the US Emb in Moscow. (pp from A 177-181.

There is nothing in the language Abel quotes or paraphrases to justify his comment & description of "argumentative", "confused", verbose, & "the nightmare outcry of a frightened man." Only in a mind dedicated to the justification of US policy & propaganda would such it as ~~even~~ occur, for the letter is an eloquent, passionate, straightforward exposition of what should have been obvious from the beginning. It is more [illegible] & in no way suggests the USSR is going to retreat from its position or its commitment to ~~def~~ defend Cuba. It carefully explains its intentions (but as Abel presents it, not its reasoning of how missiles would defend Cuba, which they could not) & even in Abel's ~~[illegible]~~ version ~~it~~ openly chides Kennedy for his deception at Vienna over the Bay of Pigs and then goes even further, implying Kennedy had "lost your self control" - a very stiff dose!! It puts the ~~[illegible]~~ choice of mutual extermination directly up to Kennedy. And at the same time it boasts that all the intended missiles are already in Cuba. It is honest in declaring Kh. would not speak for Castro (~~or~~ so, even though this would have been a

Sc(11-3) [illegible] & [illegible] presumption for the U.S. to make. (Kh made it specific from the first). It says the ships ~~that~~ that upon agreement with U Thant's proposal the Russian ships would be searched, showing they had no such cargoes as the "American ~~people~~ military people wrongly imagined" (Kh's words) (And this was never done, so it is certain ~~that~~ Kennedy must have been satisfied Kh. spoke the truth. It was a very foolish offer if he was lying!) This letter is a remarkable document & the reasons for its suppression by the U.S is ~~[illegible]~~ ~~appar~~ apparent. The timing is also significant & may or may not be the reason Abel ignores it in his book. In Moscow the letter had to be first translated, then ~~[illegible]~~ encoded ~~to~~ ~~befo~~ before the slow process of ~~tele~~ tele typing began. Either it was given to the U.S. Emb. after Moscow got word of the delivery of the ~~[illegible]~~ essence of its ~~[illegible]~~ proposal or Fomin was instructed to ~~delive~~ deliver the summary about when the message was handed over. The ~~First~~ first is the more likely probability. In the State Dept as the teletypewriters printed the long letter, it was, sheet by sheet, decoded & then given to Rusk, who had Ball & Thompson with him. Why this had to be coded, especially under the circumstances, escapes me. It was a hideous waste of time at both ends while the world teetered on the brink. Rusk & company, in Kh's ~~two~~ words "kept looking for the ~~[illegible]~~ catch" What ~~[illegible]~~ blind men! What evil & closed minds! How could anyone in Kh's position have been tried to pull a fast one? Had he been seeking a war, he would have earlier pressed his button & sent the missiles flying. And he clearly explained how the missiles would not be used to fight a war – only to deter invasion.

Rusk made a fearful mistake whose possible consequence can only be imagined after reading Abel's lines. He consulted Dean Acheson! (Quote verbatim marked part of 182)

Scali-4] This eloquent & articulate man, powerful & respected despite a record of consistent error in policy & lack of understanding, whose failures had been ~~sustain~~ sustained only because of the tremendous power of US arms, the magnitude of its wealth & the blindness of the war which left her strong among the major combatants with her land unscathed, her ~~the~~ economy unhurt, whose mind & heart were wed to his implacable hatred and whose motivation was justification of his own record, would have found the Mephistopheles won of ~~tt~~ glow from a halo shielded. Or suppose he in this place & office; and if the glory of the almighty had shown in all its glory from that land, to Acheson it would have ~~been~~ been the light of hell's fire. ~~Imagine~~ Imagine the stupidity or the duplicity of the man who believes or at least would say that "we had the thumbscrew on Khrushchev" and his monumental lack of understanding of ~~it~~ - or ~~worse~~ worse, indifference to the magnitude of the catastrophe that could at ~~any~~ any second through ~~the~~ any one of ~~a~~ countless thousands of errors or mischances (some of which befell us) end civilization! He wanted to turn his unappeasing thumbscrew on this imagined ~~too~~ captive hand "another turn a day" for untold days - any one of which threatened modern war - for nothing but the indulgence of hate! What would ~~the~~ WE possibly have profited from ~~th~~ his ~~advice~~ ADVICE? Only dangers & hazards beyond description, multiplying in horrifying geometrical proportions. Was there ~~any~~ any

Sch 5] chance of a better solution – a more favorable "deal" in his terms? There was not – and if there had ~~been~~ been, there was absolutely no way the U S could have ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ compelled it. It would not, in fact, even dare DEMAND ~~demand~~ it. Events were soon to show the alternatives were all less desirable, but this man, who had built a reputation as a seer & apostle of wisdom on a record of failure tried his best to frustrate solution of the worst crisis in recorded history & divert those who ~~[illegible]~~ saw the way out here provided. (He had to be "drunk" ~~[illegible]~~ Rusk & Thompson (no mention of Ball!!) "to convince to liquidate this thing"! Is it possible that liquidation of such an impending holocaust could come too fast?

The dreams & illusions these grown men, supposedly mature and acute of mind, here & now permitted themselves are more like the troubled night visions of a child whose development was prematurely arrested. They "thought they could discern the shape of an eventual settlement." That shillyshallying lost them some of what was offered free (or was it Acheson). "Khrushchev" had no stomach for a direct confrontation" Why then had he so carefully arranged it and in the moment of Truth, that pendant moment of history hanging like a drop of ~~dew~~ dew on the very end of a twig, stood firm and declared "Let it fall. Here I stand."? He found the cost of what he had calculated in advance "too horrendous" – but Kennedy & Acheson & company did not?

(Cuba-6) Could they be human & not find the word "horrendous"?

He had not even demanded — as he might have and soon offered as an alternative — the removal of American U.S. missiles not 90 miles from his shore but standing on his ~~toes~~ toes in Turkey. (183)

Only Roger Hilsman could add 1+1 & get 2, which he apparently alone among the intellectual acumen of US diplomacy had the mental capacity to do (Acheson must have gone home to play with his gold-plated toy soldiers & ornamental lead miniature boats) He put Scali's offer & Kh's letter together & ~~[illegible]~~ saw what must be taught in freshman basic diplomacy, that the head of a state cannot put in writing what "he would later disown if need be." And at last, it would seem, that it was finally understood that Kh. had make a damned good offer, "his way of spelling out ... the eventual shape of a settlement tolerable to both sides" (Abel's word, 183)

So the "ex comm" met at 10 p.m. in "extraordinary session" Abel says, but did it even have a session of other character? They ~~[illegible]~~ decided it ~~too~~ "to treat" the letter as a bona fide proposal meriting a serious reply"

Fine! The world teeters on a cliff over oblivion and the cliff begins to shake. ~~Ex~~ Multiple Dick Darlings to the rescue! ~~And~~ A whole Ex Committee of Dick Darlings! So what do they do? They let the world teeter and "went to bed"

Scol1-7

in George Ball's words" with a vast sense of relief.

And back at the "O K Corral" in Foggy Bottom Roger ~~Hilsman~~ Hilsman left to two Soviet busters scouring the letter ~~& Stalin's purpose~~ "to make ~~certain~~ sure the text contained no booby traps."

Certainly experts who had been so completely lacking in comprehension of what they had done to the world or understanding of ~~that~~ why the world wouldn't let ~~it continue~~ their policies continue; naturally such sinister men who arrogated all right and ~~at~~ wisdom to themselves while practising international law like ~~a~~ Philadelphia lawyers, such diplomatic shysters who had invented most of the shady deals of recent years, would not ~~trus~~ trust anyone else. Even if their hands, hearts & minds had been clean, they had the right & obligation to be as certain as humanly possible about the true purpose of this offer.

But did circumvention have to impend while Helmut Sonnenfeldt & Joseph Neubert, Hilsman's experts, spent the long night suspecting, studying, analyzing & doping angles?* while the commn slept?

Sedi's 8

Knowing of the possibility of the Turkey-missiles ploy (and being relieved it hadn't been used) in itself should have compelled some move, some effort no matter how slight & tenuous, to take an option on the deal. Before ~~the~~ going home could not a query been sent to Kh, the enciphering, teletyping, ~~decoding~~ teletyping, decoding, message carrying & translation taking place while they slept, or could they not have phoned Dobrynin to slip over and pick up a little note, ~~to~~ with his boys ~~doing all the~~ riding the mechanical diplomatic pony express of the last half of the 20th century. Could not they have slept after getting off, ~~[illegible]~~ formally or informally, a billet doux for Kh. on his awakening, reading simply ~~[illegible]~~ "Dear Nikita – We understand your offer ---- If our understanding is correct, boy you've got a deal!"

Everybody would then have gone to ~~slep~~ sleep, & slept ~~po~~ in peace. ~~Guess they'd have~~

~~got them a better deal than they later grabbed.~~

Scali 9

They forgot that by their bed-time a fourth of the deadline Robert Kennedy had given ~~Dobry~~ Dobrynin had run out. They didn't think ~~of~~ that they were not ~~at~~ alone with ~~to~~ the power to impose deadlines. Nor did they consider their deadline worked ~~against~~ against them as well as Kh., or that there are all sorts & varieties of deadlines.

With the first ~~tack~~ break in the clouds they imagined the storm had passed.

So, they went home to sleep, "with a vast sense of relief", leaving the ~~to~~ world in crisis - for Kh. did not know of the vastness of their relief - and he wanted relief, too. And they failed to cinch a better deal ~~than~~ than the one they soon grabbed.

PS to
Scali

Even the question of the removal of the missiles from Cuba did not, really exist, for that, too, was in Kh's letter. But so far removed from the normal thought processes of diplomacy had the U.S. govt. gotten in an era when it manipulated ~~govts~~ other governments & their vulnerable ~~leaders~~ leaders like markers in a game of "Monopoly" that it failed to detect the niceties of the ~~act~~ art as Kh, for all his peasant origin and lack of formal schooling was careful to observe them.

The Russian leader was careful not to infringe upon Cuban sovereignty. Likewise, whether or not he intended the missiles as defensive only, he would not either acknowledge a claim that he ran the Cuban Defense Ministry. So he did not, as he could not & nor if he did run it, should not claim to speak for the Cuban government. In the language of diplomacy, which always permits a certain amount of double-talk in both expression & interpretation, he gave the ~~[illegible]~~ necessary assurances: he "had reason to believe," in Abel's paraphrase, that Castro would "demobilize his forces." The only "forces" that interested JFK were the missiles. And of these, again in Abel's words, Kh. said the problem "would appear in a different light."

What these passages of the letter meant ~~It~~ depended on how the U.S. experts chose to interpret ~~them~~ ~~passages of the letter~~ them. Kh. may not have ~~intended~~ intended the meaning we attributed to them. There is at least as much reason to believe he did. But whether or not he did, the fact that he might have should not have been missed by the Secretary of State, his closest advisers, his intelligence chief & the best men the President of the U.S. had to counsel him. They only ~~pretend~~ PRETEND TO HAVE MISSED IT.

Scali-ps

Abel agrees with the then & subsequent U.S. line that Kennedy was always careful to leave NK an "out," to use no more force than was necessary in another formulation, to give him a quid pro quo. What he does not acknowledge is that it was NK who gave this seeming victory - his out - to JFK by the manner in which he handled the situation, especially by making it possible for the young President, who he thought had ~~lost~~ lost himself entirely, to pretend to be making the offer & dictating the terms. The opposite was true.

As the older man knew & possibly anticipated, JFK had committed himself so publicly & irrevocably that any other posture for him other than that of "victor" was political suicide, which he could not accept.